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A  
RELATION  
OF THE  
FEARFUL ESTATE  
OF  
Francis Spira,

In the year 1548.

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Compiled by *Nath. Bacon*, Esq.

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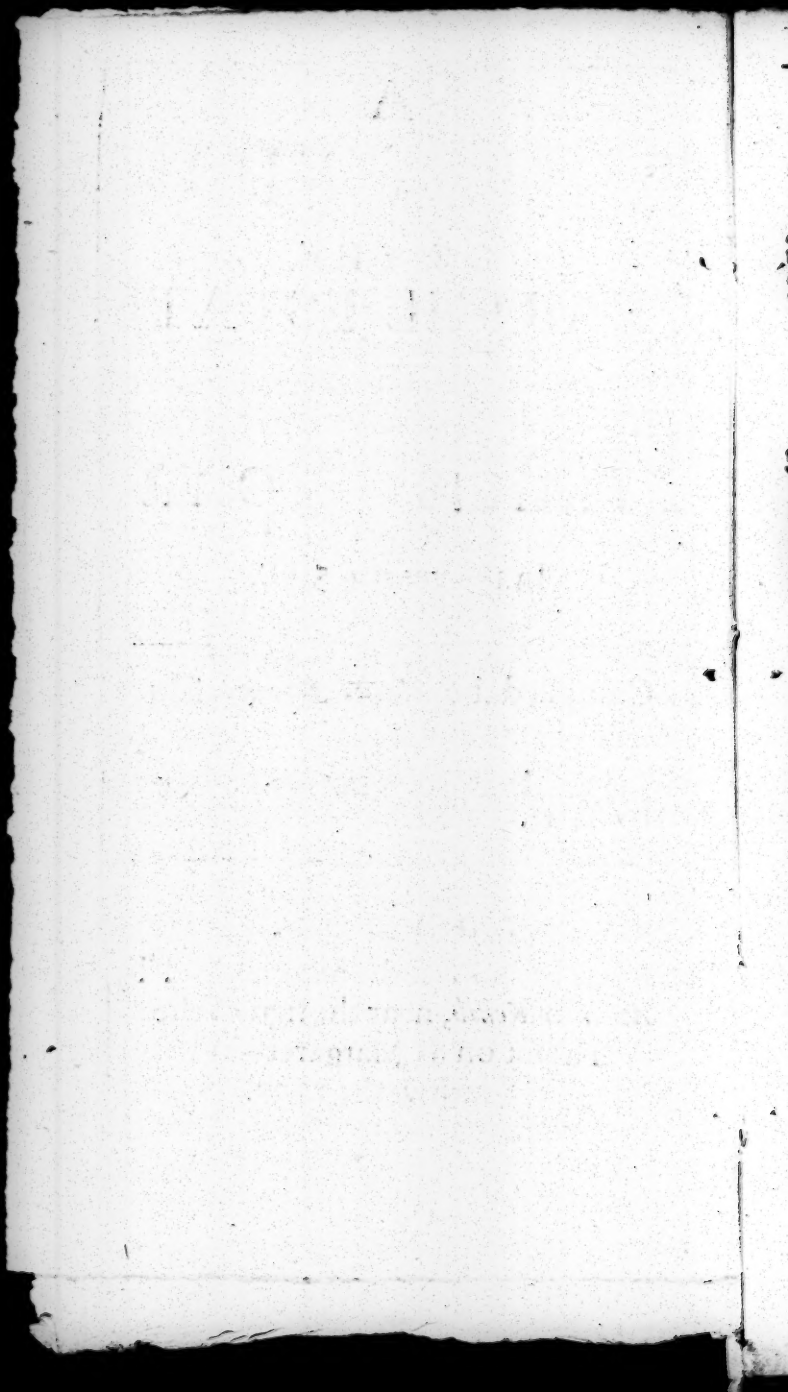
*The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own waies,*  
Prov. 14. 14.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed by J. B. and are to be sold by  
*Andrew Kemb*, near the sign of the  
Talbot on St Margarets-hill  
in Southwark, 1657.

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V







## A P R E F A C E.

**F**Or truth of this  
Historie ensuing,  
besides circum-  
stances of place,  
person, time, oc-  
casion, so exactly observed:  
I refer my self to the Rela-  
tion of those Godly men, who  
in several Languages have ma-  
nifested to the world the seve-  
ral passages thereof: and al-  
though I am not ignorant,  
that at the first they were not  
onely not credited, but also  
discredited and slandered, by  
such as found them to bee a

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*A Preface.*

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Blur to the *Romane* Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby, but being acquitted by many Compurgators of several Nations, and some of the Romish Religion, being all of them spectators of this Tragedy: it occasioned not only a further manifestation & confirmation of the truth, but also a large and more frequent confluence, to see that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the succeeding Story: but more fully out of an Apologie written by *Vergerius* Bishop of *Justinople*, who was accused for dispersing the fame of his Example to the stain of Popery, in which Apologie to *N. Rottan*, Suffragan of *Padua*, is shortly and plainly declared, what was said, what was done, and who were

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*A Preface.*

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were present. If that it bee demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatise : *Spira*, tell them that it should teach fear and reverence, and indeed among all those that come to see him, few or none returns unshaken *Vergerius* in his first Epistle saith : I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble : and in his Apology saith, it is such a rare example, as I would willingly go to the furthest parts of the world to hear or see the like. The Ladie *Jane* to her Fathers Chaplain (that had fallen into *Spira's* sin) saith, Remember the lamentable estate of *Spira*. I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in our Mother tongue, concerning this subject, but as far as I can

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*A Preface.*

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learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present Treatise, and as I have heard, a translation of onely one of the Tractates from whence I have gathered this present Discourse in part. Concerning my care and fidelitie in this businesse, it is such, as I may truly say without changing of colour, that there is not one sentence of all this Work attributed unto the person of *Spira*, but it hath its Warrant, either from the Epistles of *Vergerius* and *Gribauldus*, Professors of the Law in *Padua*, or from the discourses of *Henry Scringer* a *Scotish* man, *Sigismund Gelons* a *Transilvanian*, and *Mart. Boeha* a Divine of *Basil*: neither have I taken any  
other

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*A Preface.*

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other libertie then as a relation to weave the foresaid Discourses one within another, so as those which under several Writers were before counted several, are now by my in-deavours reduced into one intire Historie, connexed by due succession of time and occasion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned men before-named.

N. B.

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To the { Author  
&  
Reader } of this Historie.

**S**ome scattered parcels of this Story lay  
In Forraign Papers; which hadst not found a way  
Thus to collect, had<sup>been obvious prey,</sup>  
Never seen the day.

Reader wouldst see how sinning 'gainst the light,  
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night  
Of discontents. Come hither Reader then, look here,  
And learn light quenching sins to fear.

Reader wouldst see the comfort-breathing Spirit  
To grieve, What curelesse grief it doth demerit?  
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a soul that's all despair: A man  
Ail hell, a spirit all one wound; who can  
Awounded spirit bear?

Reader wouldst see (what maiest thou never see!)  
Despairs, Racks, Tortures, whips of burning steel?  
Come then, look here.

Behold

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Behold this man, this Furnace, in whose heart  
Sin hath created Hells. Oh, in each part

What flames appear !

His thoughts all stings, words swords, brimstone his  
breath ;

His sighs flames, wishes curses, life a death :

A thousand deaths live in him, he not dead :

A breathing Coarse in living-scalding Lead :

And yet he lives our Monuments ; to tell

How black are quenched lights ;

Quench't joies are double frights,

Black daies are double nights ;

Heaven tasted, lost, a double Hell,

I have call'd thee Reader, pray so be,  
Read this, that others read not thee.

Legas Historiam,

Nō hias Historiā.

M. N.

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Extra-





**E**Xtraordinary Examples  
of divine Justice, **GOD**  
never intended for a  
nine dayes wonder; else would  
he, when he exemplified *Lots*  
wife, have turned her into a  
statue of melting snow, not  
of lasting salt; which stood,  
as *Josephus* tells us, till his age,  
after the destruction of *Jeru-*  
*salem*; and as some Travellers  
report, till at this day: *ut quod-*  
*dam hominibus præstaret condi-*  
*mentum, quo sapiant unde illud*  
*caveatur exemplum: Aug. de*  
*civit. Dei, lib. 16. cap. 30.* for  
a season against corruption, a  
preservative against Apostacy.  
This Tragedie, when fresh and  
new, was the conversion and  
confirmation of sundry Wor-  
A thies:

thies *Vergerius*, a daily Spectator thereof, forsaking a rich Bishoprick of *Justinopolis*, and tents of Antichrist, went to *Basil* and dyed a worthy Protestant: many Nations had Eye-witnesses of their own Students then in the Univerſity of *Padua* who penned the ſtory, the Copies whereof are frequently revived; our English ones were very defective, and now worn out of ſhops and hands; ſundry Manuscripts of this abroad, imperfect; which moved me to compare this labour of a worthy Gentleman ( who faithfully tranſlated it out of *Italian*, *French* and *Dutch* Letters ) with the *Latine* of *Cælius Secundus*, *Curio*, *Mattheus Gribauldus*, professors of the Civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigismond Gelous* a *Transilvanian*,  
*Henricus*

*Henricus Scotus*, all daily visitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them. Touching *Spira's* person, I find most learned Writers do incline to the right and hopefull hand; moved by his sweet, humble, and charitable speeches; some few desparate ones excepted, that fell from him in some little agonies which kept him fasting and watching about fix moneths space, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The summe of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counsels\* is, that all learn to take heed of backsliding, which Gods soul abhors, and not to dally with Conscience, and hell on earth, if justly incensed; more to be feared then the Spanish Inquisition, or all the Strappadoes and torments in the world;

(\* who  
write large-  
ly of the use  
of this pa-  
tern )

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and to take heed of *spira's*  
principall Errors : which were,  
to dispute with Satan over-  
busily in time of weaknesse;  
especially to reason, and con-  
clude from present sense, to  
Gods past Reprobation, and  
future Damnation : both  
which is hard, if possible, for  
any men to determine in his  
own, much more in others ca-  
ses : so commending thee to his  
grace, who is able to establish  
thee to the end: I bid thee  
farewell, and hope well, while  
the space of Grace lasteth: *Dum  
spiras, spera*; so mayest thou  
take good and no hurt, by the  
reading of this terrible Exam-  
ple.



A  
RELATION  
of the fearfull  
state of *Francis*  
SPIRA.

**I**N the yeat, 1548.  
when the glorious  
Sun of the Gospel  
was but newly  
risen in *Europe*; in  
the days of the raign of *Edward*,  
the Sixth of that name, King of  
ENGLAND. In the  
Territorie, and under the  
Jurisdiction of the City of  
*Venice*, being the very border  
of *Italy*, in the town of *Citta-*  
A. 3 della,

*della*, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and esteem, being of known learning, and eloquence, of great experience, of carriage circumspect and severe, his speech grave and composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced, endowed with outward blessings, of wife, and eleven children, and wealth in abundance : what his worst parts were, I have no other warrant then his own words, which ( if not tainted overmuch with the bitternesse of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion, then of sober confession ) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

“ I



“I was (saith he) excessive-  
“ly covetous of mony, and ac-  
“cordingly I applied my self to  
“get by injustice, corrupting ju-  
“stice by deceit, inventing tricks  
“to delude justice: good causes  
“I either defended deceitfully, or  
“sold them to the adversary per-  
“fidiously: ill causes I mainteined  
“with all my might: I witting-  
“ly opposed the known truth,  
“and the trust committed unto  
“me, I either betrayed or per-  
“verted. Thus having worn  
out forty four yeares, or  
thereabouts, and the news  
of the new, or rather newly  
revived opinions of Luther  
coming into those parts, re-  
presented an object of novelty  
unto him; who being as desi-  
rous to know, as he was fa-  
mous for knowledg, suffered  
not these wandring opinions to

pass unexamined; but searching into the Scriptures, and into all bookes of Controversie that he could get, both old and new; and finding more then same or opinion, he began to taste their nature so well, as he entertaines, loves, and owns them at length; and with such zeal, as he became a professor, yea a teacher of them; first to his wife, children, and family; and after to his friends, and familiar acquaintance, and in comparision, seem'd to neglect all other affaires; intending ever to presse this main point, that *We must wholly, and onely depend on the free and unchangeable love of G O D in the death of Christ, as the onely sure way to salvation:* and this was the summe of all his discourse: and this continued for the space of  
of



of six yeares, or thereabouts ; even so long as this fire could keep it selfe within private walls, but at length, it brake forth into publick meetings, so as the whole Province of *Padua* dawned by the lustre thereof. The Clergy finding the trade of their pardons to decay, and their Purgatory to wax cold, began to bestirre themselves : glosing their actions, first, with calumnious aspersions upon the whole profession ; then more plainly striking at *Spira* with grievous accusation. And to effect their purpose, some promise labour, others favour, some advice, others maintenance ; all joyn to divide, either his soul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Casa*, the Popes Legate, resident at *Ve-*

*nice*, being by birth a *Florentine*: and one that wanted neither malice against those of this way, nor craftinesse to effect his malicious purposes; To him these men repair without cries against *Spira*, that he was the man that condemned the received rights of the Church: deluded the Ecclesiasticall power, and scandalized the policie thereof: one of no mean rank: being a man of Account and authority and thereunto learned in the Scriptures, elegant in speech: and in one word, a dangerous *Lutheran*: having also many disciples, and therefore not to be despised.

At this began the *Legate* to cast his eyes on the terrible alteration that lately had happened in *Germany*; where, by the  
meanes

means of one onely *Luther*, the Romish Religion had suffered such a blow, as that it could neither be cured by dissimulation, nor defended by power: but the Clergy must either mend their manners, or lose their dignities: on the other side, when he saw how propense the common people, inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain those new opinions, he now thought it no time to dispute, or perswade: but with speed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to send to *Spira*.

*Spira* by this time had considered with himselfe of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore subject to be envied by such, as neither liked  
his

his person nor religion ; he perceived that his opinions were neither retired, nor speculative, but such as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and a change of policy ; wherein at the best, he could expect but a bloody victory ; and that his enemies wanted neither power nor occasion, to call him to an account in publick : when he must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former life, yea his own conscience, the lye, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly enemies ; or forsake his wife ; children, friends, goodes, authority : yea, his dear Country ; and betake himselfe to a forraign people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being

Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restlesse waves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or haven to fly to for succor; on the suddain. GOD'S Spirit assisting, he felt a calm, and began to discourse with himselfe, in this manner.

*Why wandrest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy man? cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of faith. Where is thy wonted courage, thy goodnesse, thy constancy? remember that Christs glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear. & he wil defend thee, he wil tel thee what thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger, bring thee out of prison, raise thee from the dead; consider Peter in the dungeon, the Martyrs in the fire; if thou makest a good confession, thou maist indeed go to prison, or death, but an eternall reward in heaven remains.*

*remains for thee : What hast thou in this world comparable to Eternal life, to everlasting happiness? if thou doest otherwise, think of the scandal; (common people live by example, thinking whatever is done, is wel done;) fear the loss of peace and joy, fear hell, death, and eternall wrath; or if thy flesh be so strong, as to cause thee to doubt of the issue, fly thy Countrey; get thee away, though never so far rather then deny the Lord of life.*

Now was *Spira* in reasonable quiet, being resolved to yield to these weighty reasons: yet holding it wisdom to examine all things, he consults also with flesh and blood; thus the battel doth renew, and the flesh begins in this manner: *Be well advised, fond man, consider reasons on both sides*



*sides. and then judg : how canst thou thus overween thine own sufficiency, as thou neither regardest the examples of thy Progenitors, nor the judgment of the whole Church : dost thou not consider, what misery this thy rashnesse wil bring thee unto? thou shalt lose all thy substance, gotten with so much care and travell : thou shalt undergo to the most exquisite torments that malice it selfe can devise : thou shalt be counted an Heritick of all, and to close up all, thou shalt die shamefully. What thinkest thou of the loathsome stinking dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning fagot? are they delightful? Be wise at length, and keep thy life and honour : thou mayest live to do much good to good men, as God commands thee : thou mayest be an ornament to thy Country ;  
and*

and put case, the Countries losse would be of small esteem with thee; Wilt thou bring thy friends also into danger? thou hast begotten children, wilt thou now cut their throats, and inhumanely butcher them, which may in time bring honour to their Country, glory to God, help and furtherance to his Church? go to the Legat, weak man, freely confesse thy fault, and help all these miseries. Thus did the cares of this World, and the deceitfulness of riches, choake the good Seed that was formerly sown: so as fearing hee faints, and yields unto the allurements of this present world, and being thus blinded, he goes to the Legat at Venice, and salutes him with this newes.

*Having for these divers  
yeares*



yeares entertained an opinion concerning some Articles of faith, contrary to the Orthordox, and received judgment of the Church, and uttered many things against the authority of the Church of Rome, and the universall Bishop: I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my jolly in misleading others: I therefore yeeld my selfe in all obedience, to the Supream Bishop, into the Bosome of the Church of Rome; never to depart again from the traditions and decrees of the holy See: I am heartily sorry for what is past; and I humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.

The Legat perceiving Spira to faint, he persues him to the utmost; he causes a recitation of all his Errors to be drawn in writing, together with

with the Confession annexed to it. and commands *Spira* to subscribe his name there, which accordingly he did, then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town: and there to declare this Confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome* to be holy, and true, and to adjure the Opinions of *Luther*, and other such Teachers, as false, and Heretical; *Man knows the beginning of sinne, but who bounds the issues thereof?* *Spira* having once lost footing, goes down amain, he cannot stay, nor gain-say the *Legate*: but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: he soon addresseth himselfe for his Journey: and being onward in the way, he thinks

thinks himself of the large spoiles he had brought away, from the Conflict with the *Legate*: what glorious testimony he had given of his great faith, and constancy in Christ's cause: and to be plain, how impiously he had denied Christ, and his Gospel at *Venice*: and what he promised to do further in his own Countrey: and thus partly with fear, and partly with shame being confounded. he thought he heard a voyce speaking unto him, in this manner.

Spira, *What dost thou here? whither goest thou? hast thou, unhappy man, given thy hand writing to the Legate at Venice? yet see thou dost not seal it in thy own Countrey. dost thou indeed thinke eternall life so mean,*

mean, as that thou preferrest this present life before it? dost thou well in preferring wife and children before Christ? is the windy applause of the people, better indeed then the glory of God; and the possession of this Worlds good more dear to thee, then the salvation of thine owne soul? is the small use of a moment of time more desirable, then eternall wrath is dreadfull? Think with thy self, what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equall, thou shouldest suffer somewhat for him? Remember, man, that the sufferings of this present life, are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed: If thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also reign with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; neverthelesse, the gate of mercy is not quite shut: take heed  
that

*that thou heapest not sin upon sin,  
least thou repent when it will be  
too late.*

Now was *Spira* in a wilder-  
nesse of doubt, not knowing  
which way to turn him, nor  
what to do : yet being arri-  
ved in his own Country, and  
amongst his friends, with  
shame enough he relates what  
he had done, and what he had  
further promised to do ; and  
how the terror of God on the  
one side, and the terror of this  
world on the other side, did  
continually rack him ; and  
therefore he desired of them  
advice in this so doubtfull a  
case : his friends upon small  
deliberation answered ; that it  
was requisite he should take  
heed that he did not in any  
wise betray his wife and chil-  
dren, and all his friends into  
danger,

danger, seeing that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in lesse space then halfe an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him: adding moreover, that he could get no Credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*, and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discredite could arise, more then what by the former action already he had sustained: on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, he could neither discharge himselfe of the shame which he had already incurred; nor avoid far more



injuries, that probably he should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinion.

This was the last blow of the battel: and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the Prætor, and profers to performe his promise made to the *Legate*, who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira*, to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable man ware out with restless cares, without any minute of rest, the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence

presence of friends and enemies, and of the whole Assembly; being by estimation near two thousand people; yea, and of Heaven it self, he recites that infamous abjuration: word for word, as it was written: it being done, he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid: five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration: the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of a *Shryne* to put the *Eucharist* in; then was he sent home, restored to his Dignities, goods, wife, and children; No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a dreadful voice saying to him; *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me; thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken*



broken thy vow, hence Apostate,  
bear with thee the sentence of thy  
eternall damnation: he trem-  
bling and quaking in body and  
minde, fell down in a swound;  
relief was at hand for the bo-  
dy, but from that time for-  
ward, he never found any peace  
or ease of minde; but continu-  
ing in uncessant torments, he  
professed that he was captived  
under the revenging hand of  
the great God: that he heard  
continually that fearfull sen-  
tence of Christ that just Judge;  
that he knew he was utterly  
undone; that he could neither  
hope for grace; nor Christ's in-  
tercession with God the Father  
in his behalf: thus was his fault  
ever heavie on his heart, and  
ever his Judgment before his  
eyes.

Now began his friends  
B some

some of them, to repent too late of their rash counsell: others not looking so high as the Judgment of God, laid all the blame upon his Melancholick constitution; that overshadowing his judgment, wrought in him a kind of madness: every one censured as his fancy led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholesome help of Physicians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to be had: this they accordingly did, both with his wife, children, and whole family: others also of his friends accompanying him; and being arrived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in Saint

Saint *Leonards* Parish, they sent for three Physicians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other Symptomes of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from it selfe, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour; but that this Malady of his did arise from some grief, or passion of his minde, which being over-burthened, did so oppress the spirits, as they wanting free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of man is full: and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy:

shadowed the seat of the judgment, and so corrupted it: this was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature; this they indeavoured to reform by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those humors from the brain; but all their skill effected nothing, which *spira* noting, said: *Alas poor men! how far wide are you? do you think that this disease is to be cured by potions? believ me there must be another manner of medicine, it is neither plaisters, nor drugs, that can help a fainting soul cast down with sense of sin, and the wrath of God; 'tis onely Christ that must bee the Physitian, and the Gospel the soul Antidote.*

The Physitians easily believed.

lieved him after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Country: partly for that hee was a man of Esteem: partly because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable: for this was not done in a corner: so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity, onely to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again, or at least to benefit themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of

*Justinopolis*, and *Matthews Grimbaldus*, deserve especially to be named, as the most principal labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant head-strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgment: in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink: yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously opposite: his friends laboured him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again:



gain : exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said ; As it is true *that all things* Rom. 8. 18.  
*work for the best to those that love God,* so to the wicked all are contrary: for whereas a plentiful off-spring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents; to me they are a cause of bitterness and vexation: they do strive to make me tire out this misery: I would fain be at an end: I deserve not this dealing at their hands: O! that I were gone from hence, that somebody would let out this weary soul.

His friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease: forthwith he brake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and

that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and most to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of God's promises recorded in the Scripture; and many examples of God's mercy: *My sin* (said he) *is greater then the mercy of God.* Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved: *It's true* (quoth hee) *hee would have all that he hath elected to bee saved; hee would not have damned Reprobates to be saved; I am one of that number; I know it, for I willingly, and against my knowledge denied Christ: and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.*

After some silence, one asked him whether hee did not believe

believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accused before the Legate? he answered; *I did believe it when I denied it, but now I neither believe that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church; I believe nothing, I have no faith, no trust, no hope; I am a Reprobate like Cain, or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends do me great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve.*

Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God; to which he answered: "The mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect: but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up

to wrath: I tel you I deserv it,  
 Rom. 2. 15. my own conscience condemns  
 me; what needeth any other  
 Judge? Christ came (said they)  
 to take away sin, & calling for a  
 book, they read unto him the  
 Passion of Christ; and com-  
 ing to his nailing to the Cross,  
*spira* said: " This indeed is  
 comfortable to such as are E-  
 lected, but as for me wretch,  
 they are nothing but grief and  
 torment, becaus I contemned  
 them. Thus roaring for grief,  
 and tossing himselfe up and  
 down upon the bed as he lay,  
 he intreated them to read no  
 more: As *Gribauldus* was com-  
 ing to see him, *Vergerius* said  
 to *spira*, dear Sir, here is  
 Doctor *Gribauldus*, a godly &  
 faithfull friend of yours, come  
 to see you: " He is welcom  
 " (said he) But he shall finde  
 me

'me ill : *Gribanldus* replied,  
Sir , this is but an illusion of  
the Devill , who doth what he  
can to vex you ; but turn you  
to God with your whole  
heart , and he is ready to shew  
you mercie ; the Lord you  
know is full of mercie, it is  
he that hath said , that as *often*  
*as a sinner repents of his sin, he* *Psal. 129.*  
*will remember his sins no more.*

Consider this in the Example  
of *Peter* that was Christs fami-  
liar, and an Apostle ; and yet  
denied him thrice with an  
oath , and yet God was mer-  
cifull unto him : Consider  
the thief that spent his whole  
life in wickednesse, and for all  
that , did not God graciously  
respect him in the last minute  
of his life ? Is the Lords hand  
now shortned that it cannot  
save ? to this *Spira* answered ;

*If*

*Luk. 22. 61* If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful eie; and in that he was pardoned, it was not because he wept, but because God was gracious to him; but God respects not me, and therefore I am a Reprobate; I feel no comfort can enter into my heart, there's place there but only for torments and vexings of spirit: I tell you my case is properly mine own: no man ever was in the like plight, and therefore my estate is fearful.

Then roaring out in the bitterness of his spirit, said: It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God: the violence of his passion and action sutable, did amaze many of the beholders; insomuch as some of them said with a whispering voice, that he was possessed



possessed : hee over-hearing it, said : *Do you doubt it? I have a whole Legion of devils that take up their dwellings within me, and possesse me as their own: and justly too, for I have denied Christ. Whether did you that willingly or not? (said they.) That's nothing to the purpose. (said Spira :) Christ saith, Whosoever de-* Mat. 10. 33  
*nies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven : Christ will not be denied, no not in word ; and therefore it is enough, though in heart I never denied him.*

They observing his distemper to arise from the sense and horror of the pains of hell, asked him whether he thought there were worse pains then what he endured for the present ; he said, that he knew *there were far worse pains then those*

*Psal. i.*

'those that he then suffered;  
 'for the wicked shall rise to  
 'their judgment, but they shall  
 'not stand in judgment: this I  
 'tremble to thinke of: yet do  
 'I desire nothing more, then  
 'that I might come to that  
 'place, where I may be sure to  
 'feel the worst, and to be freed  
 'from fear of worse to come.

I but you are to consider (said  
 one) that those opinions for  
 which you were accused before  
 the *Legate*, were impious; and  
 therefore you are not to thinke  
 you denied Christ, but rather  
 that you confessed him, ac-  
 knowledging the infalible truth  
 of the Catholick Church.  
 'Truly (said he) when I did de-  
 ny those opinions, I did thinke  
 'them to be true, and yet I did  
 deny them.

Go to (said others); now  
 then

then blieve that they are true,  
‘Now I cannot (said he); God  
‘will not suffer me to believe  
‘them, nor trust in his mercy:  
‘, what would you have me do?  
‘I would fain attain to this  
‘power, but cannot, though I  
‘should presently be burnt for  
‘it. But why do you, said the o-  
ther, esteem this so grievous a  
sin, when as the learned *Legate*  
constrained you to it, which  
he surely would not have done,  
if your former opinions had  
not been Erroneous: no, good  
*Francis*, the Devil besets thee,  
let not therefore the grievous-  
nesse of thy sin, (if any such  
be) amaze thee. ‘You say right  
‘(replied he); the Devil hath  
‘possessed me, and God hath left  
‘me to his power; for I finde,  
‘I can neither believe the Gos-  
pel, nor trust in Gods mercy,

I have sinned against the Holy Ghost; and God by his immutable decree, hath bound me over to perpetual punishment, without any hope of pardon. It's true that  
 Rom. 9. 11. the greatnesse of sin, or the mul-  
 & Rom. 4. titude of them, cannot bind Gods mercy: all those many sins that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not so much trouble me, for I trusted that God would not lay them to my charge: but now having sinned against the holy Ghost, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance; and now brings all  
 Jam. 2. 10 my sins to remembrance; and thus guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore it's no matter whether my sins be great or small, few or many; they are such, as Christs blood, nor Gods mercie belongs to me: God will have mercy on  
 Rom. 9. 18. whom he will have mercie; and  
 whose

whom he will he hardneth; this is it that gnaws my heart, he hath hardned me; and I find that he daily more and more doth harden me, and therefore I am out of hope; I feel it, and therefore cannot but despair: I tell you, there was never such a monster as I am; never was any man alive a spectacle of so exceeding misery. I knew that justification is to be expected by Christ, and I denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adversity, and my children from poverty; and now behold how bitter this life is to me; and God onely knows, what shall become of this my family; but surely no good is likely to betide it, but rather daily worse and worse; and such a ruine at the length, as that one stone shall not be left on another.

But

But why should you (said Gri-  
 bauldus) conceit so deeply of  
 your sin, seeing you cannot but  
 know, that many have denied  
 Christ, yet never fell into de-  
 spair? Wel (said he) I can see  
 no ground of comfort for  
 such, neither can I warrant  
 them from God's revenging  
 hand in wrath, though it plea-  
 seth God yet to suffer such to  
 be in peace: and besides, there  
 wil a time of danger come, &  
 then they shall be thoroughly  
 tryed; & if it were not so, yet  
 God is just in making mee an  
 example to others; & I cannot  
 justly complain: there is no  
 punishment so great, but I have  
 deserved it, for this so heinous  
 offence: I assure you it is no  
 smal matter to deny Christ, &  
 yet it is more ordinary then  
 commonly men do conceiv of:  
 it is not a denyal made before a  
 Magistrate



Magistrate as it is with me: for  
as often as a Christian doth  
dissemble the known truth: as  
often as he approves of false  
worship, by presenting him-  
self at it, so often as he hath  
not things worthy of his cal-  
ling, or such things as are un-  
worthy of his calling, so often  
he denies Christ: thus did I,  
and therefore am justly pu-  
nished for it. Your estate  
(quoth *Gribouldus*) is not so  
strange, as you make it. *Job* was  
so far gone, that he complained  
God had set him as a mark a-  
gainst him: and *David* that was  
a man after Gods own heart,  
complained often that God  
had forsaken him, and was  
become his enemy: yet both  
received comfort again: com-  
fort your selfe therefore, God  
will come at length, though  
he

hee now seem farr off.

O Brother (answered Spira) I believe all this; the diuels believe and tremble; but David was ever elected and dearly beloved of God; and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit; and therefore was heard when he praied, Lord take not thy holy Spirit from me: but I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God: neither can I pray as he did, because his holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I shall live in continuall hardnesse so long as I live: O that I might feel but the least sense of the love of God to mee, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of bell within me, and afflicts my conscience with pangs  
unutter-

*unutterable: verily desperation  
is hell it self.*

Here Gribauldus said, I do verily believe, *spira*, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

Nay (said *spira*) hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, because he afflicteth me with hardnesse of heart: O that my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul, and ease my Conscience, this burthened Conscience.

Gribauldus being desirous to ease his mind from the continual meditation of his sin; as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church: asked him  
what

what he thought became of the souls of men so soon as they departed out of the body; to which he answered.

‘ Although this be not so fully  
‘ revealed in Scripture; yet I  
‘ verily believe that the souls  
‘ of the Elect go presently to the  
‘ Kingdom of glory; and not  
‘ that they sleep with the body,  
‘ as some do imagine.

Very well, said one of the spectators; why do the Scriptures then say, that God brings down to hell, and raiseth up; seeing it cannot be meant of the estate of the soul after death, which as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption; it must be understood of the estate of the soul in this life: like that wherein thou art at this present: and often-

oftentimes wee see that God suffers men to fall into the jawes of despair, and yet raiseth them up again: and therefore despair not, but hope: it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

*This is the work (quoth Spira) this the labour: for I tell you when I at Venice did first abjure my profession, and so, as it were, drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonish'd mee: and when at Cittadella, I did, as it were, set to my seal: the Spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write Spira, do not seal: yet I resisted the Holy Ghost, and did both; and at that very present I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will; so although I can say, I would believe, yet can I not say, I will believe. God hath denied me the power of will:*

will: and it befalls me in this my miserable estate, at with one that is just in irons, and his friends coming to see him, do pity his estate, and do perswade him to shake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows he would fain do, but cannot: this is my very case; you perswade me to believe: how fain would I do it, but cannot. Onow I cannot. Then violently grasping his hands together, and raising himself up: Behold (said hee) I am strong, yet by little and little I decay and consume, and my servants would fain preserve this weary life: but at length the will of God must be done, and I shall perish miserably as I deserve: Rejoice yee righteous in the Lord: blessed are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.

Esa 37.11

Then



Then after some pause; *It's wonderful, I earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is onely in Christ, yet I cannot set my self to lay hold on it; such are the punishments of the damned: they confesse what I confesse, they repent of their losse of heaven; they envy the Elect; yet their repentance doth them no good, for they cannot mend their waies.*

As he was thus speaking, he observed diverse flies that came about him, and some lighted on him: *Behold (said he) now also \*Beelzebub comes to his banquet, you shall shortly see my end, and in me an example to many, of the Justice and Judgment of GOD.*

\* Signifies  
the god of  
flies.

About this time came in  
two Bishops, with diverse  
C Schollers

Schollers of the University, one of them being *Paulus Vergerius*, having observed *Spira* more then any other, being continually conversant with him : told him his estate was such, as rather stood in need of praier then advice : and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lord's Praier ; *Spira* consented, and he began.

[Our Father which art in heaven,] then breaking forth into tears he stopped ; but they said, It is well, your grief is a good sign : ‘ I bewail ( said he ) my  
‘ misery, for I perceive I am  
‘ forsaken of God, and cannot  
‘ call to him from my heart,  
‘ as I was wont to do ; yet let  
us go on, said *Vergerius*.

‘ Thy kingdom come : ] O Lord  
‘ ( said *Spira* ) bring me also into  
‘ this kingdom : I beseech thee  
shut

shut me not out. Then coming to those words, [Give us this day our daily bread:] he added: 'O Lord I have enough & abundance to feed this carcase of mine: but there is another bread I humbly beg, the bread of thy grace: without which, I know I am but a dead man.

Lead us not into temptation:] 'seeing Lord that I am brought into temptation, help me Lord that I may escape: the enemy hath overcome, help me, I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel Tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly: and expressing such affections & passion, as turned the bowels of those there present, with grief and compunction: they then turning to *Spira*, said; You

C 2 know

know that none can call *Christ Jesus the Lord*, but by the holy Ghost : you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection, which you expresse in your praiers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive (said *Spir*) that I  
 call on him to my eternal dam-  
 nation: for I tell you again, it is  
 Psa. 109. 7. a new and unheard of exam-  
 ple that you find in me : If  
*Judas* (said they) had but out-  
 lived his daies, which by nature  
 he might have done : he might  
 have repented, and Christ  
 would have received him to  
 mercy : and yet he sinned most  
 grievously against his Master,  
 which did so esteem of him, as  
 to honor him with the dignity  
 of an Apostle, and did maintain  
 and

and feed him : He answered,  
‘ Christ did also feed and ho-  
‘ nour me, neither yet is my  
‘ fault one jot less then that of  
‘ his; because it is not more  
‘ honour to be personally pre-  
‘ sent with Christ in the flesh,  
‘ then to be in his presence now  
‘ by illumination of his holy  
‘ Spirit: and besides, I deny that  
‘ ever Judas could have repen-  
‘ ted, how long soever he had  
‘ lived; for grace was quite ta-  
‘ ken from him, as it is now  
‘ from me.

O *Spira* (said they) you know  
you are in a Spiritual desertion,  
you must therefore not believe  
what Satan suggests; he was  
ever a Liar from the begining,  
and a meer Impostor, and will  
cast a thousand lying fancies  
into your mind, to beguile you  
withall; you must rather be-

liev those whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you then your self: believe us, and wee tell you that God will be merciful unto you.

‘O here is the knot (said *spira*: ) I would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled withall: that he saw the divels come flocking into his chamber, and about his bed terrifying him with strange noises, that these were not fancies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by: and that besides these outward terrors, he felt continually a racking torture of his minde, and a continual butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper  
pangs



pangs of the damned wights in hell.

Cast away these fancies (said *Gribauldus*;) these are but illusions; humble your self in the presence of God, and praise him. ' The dead praise not *psal. 6. 5.*  
' the Lord (answered he) nor  
' they that go down into the  
' pit: we that are drowned in  
' despair are dead, and already  
' gone down into the pit: what  
' hell can there be worse then  
' desperation; or what great-  
' er punishment? the gnaw-  
' ing worm, unquenchable fire,  
' horror, confusion, and (which  
' is worse then all) desperation  
' it self continually tortures me,  
' and now I count my present  
' estate worse, then if my soul  
' (separated from my body)  
' were with *Judas* and the rest  
' of the damned, and therefore,

C 4 I now

‘ now desire rather to be there,  
 ‘ then thus to live in the bodie.

One being present, repeated  
 certain words out of the *Psalms*:

*Psal.* 89.30 If thy Children forsake my  
 Law, and walk not in my judg-  
 ments; I will visit their trans-  
 gressions with rods, and their  
 iniquitie with stripes; never-  
 theless my loving kindness I  
 wil not utterly take from them,  
 nor suffer my faithfulness to  
 fail: mark this, *O spira*, my Co-  
 venant I will not break.

‘ These promises (said *spira*)

‘ belong onely to the Elect,

‘ which if tempted, may fall in-

‘ sin; but are again lifted up

*Prov.* 24.

16.

‘ and recovered out : as the

*Psal.* 37.24

‘ *Prophet* saith, though he fall,

‘ hee shall not bee utterly cast

‘ down, for the Lord uphold-

‘ eth him; therefore *Peter* could

‘ rise, for he was Elected, but

‘ the

' the reprobate when they fall,  
 ' cannot rise again, as appears  
 ' in *Cain, Saul, and Judas* : God  
 ' deals one way with the Elect,  
 ' and another with Reprobates.

The next day he praied with  
 them in the Latine tongue, and  
 that with excellent affection, as  
 outwardly appeared. Blessed be  
 God (said *Vergerius*); these are  
 no signs of eternal reprobati-  
 on: you must not, O *Spira*, seek  
 out the secret counsels of God's  
 election and reprobation : for  
 no man can know, so long as  
 he lives, whether by his good  
 or bad deeds, he be worthy of <sup>Ecc. 9. 1.</sup>  
 God's love or anger : do you <sup>Ps. 88. 14</sup>  
 not know that the Prophet *Da-*  
*vid* complained, that God had  
 cast off his Sou'.

*I know all this (quoth Spira) I*  
*know the mercies of God are in-*  
*finite, & do surpass the sins of the*

*whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impossible as to drink up the sea at a draught: As for that of Solomon, if he had ever tried that which I feel by woful experience, he would never have spoken as he did: but the truth is, never had mortal man such an evident experience of God's anger and haired against him, as I have: you that are in a good estate, think repentance and faith to be work of great facility: and therefore you think it an easie matter to perswade a man to believe: the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill: but this is the hell to me, my heart is hardened, I cannot believe: many are called, but few are chosen.*

*Upon*

Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of your self.

‘I once did know God to be  
‘my Father, not onely by crea-  
‘tion, but by regeneration; I  
‘knew him by his beloved  
‘Son, the author and finisher  
‘of our salvation: I could pray  
‘to him, and hope for pardon  
‘of sins from him: I had a taste  
‘of his sweetnes, peace, & com-  
‘fort: now contrarily, I know  
‘God not as a Father, but as an  
‘emie: what more? my heart  
‘hates God, and seeks to get  
‘above him: I have nothing else  
‘to fly to, but terror & despair.

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of God’s Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

*The judgments of God are a  
deep*

psal. 26. 6. deep abyss (said he) we are soon  
 Rom. 11. drowned if we enter into them; he  
 33. that thinks he standeth, let him  
 1 Cor. 10. take heed lest he fall: as for my  
 32. self, I know I am fallen back;  
 and that I once did know the  
 truth; though it may be not so  
 thoroughly: I know not what else to  
 say, but that I am one of that  
 number, which God hath threat-  
 ned to tear in pieces.

psal. 50. 22

Say not so (answered they);  
 for God may come, though at  
 the last hour; keep hold there-  
 fore, at the least by hope.

'This (quoth he) is my case, I  
 'tel you I cannot, God hath de-  
 'prived me of hope; this brings  
 'terror to my mind, and pines  
 'this bodie which now is so  
 'weak, as it cannot perform the  
 'several offices thereof: for as  
 'the Elect have the Spirit testi-  
 Rom. 8. 16. fying that they are the sons of  
 God



God; so the Reprobates, even  
while they live, do often feel a  
worm in their conscience,  
whereby they are condemned  
already; & therefore as I per-  
ceived this wound inflicted  
on my mind and will, I knew  
that I wanted the gifts of sa-  
ving grace, & that I was utter-  
ly undone; God chastneth his  
children with temporary affli-  
ctions, that they may come as  
gold out of the fire; but puni-  
sheth the wicked with blind-  
ness in their understandings,  
& hardness of heart; & wo be  
to such, from whom God  
takes his holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 11.

33.

Rom. 12.

28.

Joh. 18. 42

Here one rebuked him, and  
told him, he gave too much  
credit to sense, that he was not  
to believe himself, but rather  
him that was in a good estate; & I  
testifie to you (said he) that God  
will be merciful to you. Nay

Nay (answered he) for because I am in this ill estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort : but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity: a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do: It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labor, with all intention of heart and affection; with full desire and endeavour, continually to set forth God's glory : there must be neither fear of Legates, Inquisitors, prisons, nor any death whatsoever; many think themselves happy that are not : it is not every one that saith; Lord, Mat. 7. 22. Lord, that shall go to heaven.

They

They came another day, and found him with his eies shut, as if he had been drouzie and very loath to discourse : at which time there came in also a grave man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him, or not : he lifting up his eie-lids, and not suddenly remembering him, the man said to him ; *I am Presbyter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice*, some 8. weeks since :  
‘ O cursed day ( said *Spira* ) ! O  
‘ cursed day ! O that I had  
‘ never gone thither ! would  
‘ God I had then died.

Afterwards came in a Priest, called, *Bernardinus Sardonius*, bringing with him a book of Exorcisms, to conjure this divel : whom when *Spira* saw, shaking his head he said :

‘ I am verily perswaded indeed

‘ That

‘that God hath left me to the  
‘power of the diuel: but such  
‘they are, as are not to bee  
‘found in your Letany: nei-  
‘ther will they be cast out by  
‘spells. The Priest proceeding  
in his intended purpose; with a  
strange uncouth gesture, and a  
loud voice, adjured the spirit to  
come into *spira*’s tongue, & to  
answer: *spira* der ding his fruit-  
less labour, with a sigh, turned  
from him: a Bishop being there  
present, said to *spira*; brother,  
God hath put virtue into the  
Word and Sacraments: and we  
have used the one means, and  
find not that effect which wee  
desire; shall we try the efficacy  
of the Sacraments? surely if you  
take it, as a true Christian  
ought to receive the bodie and  
blood of Christ, it will prove  
a soveraign medicine for your  
sick soul.

‘This

‘This I cannot do (answered he) ; for they that have no right to the promises, have no right to the seals. The Eucharist was appointed onely for be-<sup>1</sup> Cor. II. lievers: if we have not faith, we<sup>33.</sup> eat and drink judgment to our selves: I received it about a month since, but I did not well in so doing; for I took it by constraint, and so I took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here Vergerius began to importune him earnestly to beware, that he did not wilfully resist grace, and put himself out of Heaven ; charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them: by the love which he bare to his children, yea to his own soul ; that he would set himself seriously to return to that faith and hope, which once he had  
in

in the death of Christ : with many such like words : *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly : and being somewhat moved, said, You do but repeat, *Vergerius* : what should I hope ? why should I believe ? God hath taken faith from me : shew me then whither I shall go, shew me a Haven whereto I shall retire. You tell me of God's mercie, when as God hath cast me off ; you tell me of Christ's intercession, I have denied him ; you command me to believe, I say I cannot : you bring me no comfort ; your command is as impossible for me to obey, as to keep the Moral Law : if you should perswade one to love God, with all his heart, soul and strength : and God gives him not the power, can he perform your desire ? Doth not the Church teach us to sing, *Di-*  
*rect*



rect us, O Lord to love thy Com-  
mandements? hypocrites say that  
they love God with all their heart,  
but they lie: for my part I will  
not lie, but tell you plainly; such  
is my case, that though you should  
never so much importune me to  
hope or believe, though I desire it,  
yet I cannot: for God as a punish-  
ment of my wickednesse hath ta-  
ken away from me all his saving  
graces, faith, hope, and all: I am  
not the man therefore that you  
take me for: belike you think I de-  
light in this estate; if I could  
conceive but the least spark of  
hope of a better estate hereafter,  
I would not refuse to endure the  
moſt heavy weight of the wrath  
of that great God; yea, for twenty  
thousand years, so that I might at  
length attain to the end of that  
misery, which I now know will  
be eternal: but I tell you, my  
will

will is wounded: who longs more to believe, then I do? but all the ground-work of my hope is quite gone; for if the testimonies of holy Scripture be true (as they are most certainly true) is not this as true: whosoever denies me before men, him (saith Christ) will I deny before my Father which is in heaven? is not this properly my case, as if it had purposely been intended against this very person of mine? And I pray you, what shall become of such as Christ denieth; seeing there is no other Name under heaven, whereby you look to be saved? What saith Saint Paul to the Hebrews? It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance: what can be more plain.

Heb. 6.

plain against me? Is not that  
Scripture also; if we sin wilful- and 10. 26  
ly after we have received the  
knowledg of the truth, there re-  
maineth no more sacrifice for sin,  
but a certain looking for of judg-  
ment: the Scripture speaks of  
me, Saint Paul meets me; Saint  
Peter tells me, it had been better <sup>1 Pet. 2. 21</sup>  
I had not known the way of  
righteousnesse, then after I have  
known, to turn from the holy  
Commandement: it had been  
better I had not known, and yet  
then my condemnation had been  
most certain: do you not see  
evidently, that I have wilfully  
denied the known truth; I may  
justly expect not only damnation,  
but worse if worse may be ima-  
gined. God will have me under-  
go the just punishment of my sin,  
and make me an example of his  
wrath for your sakes.

The

The company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life; so gravely and wisely dilating, concerning the judgments of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not frenzy or madnesse, that had possessed him; and being as it were, in admiration of his estate, *Spira* proceeded on again in this manner. 'Take heed to your selves, it is no light or easie matter to bee a Christian; it is not Baptism, or reading of the Scriptures, or boasting of faith in Christ (though even these are good) that can prove one to be an absolute Christian: you know what I said before, there must be a conformity in life; a Christian must bee strong, unconquerable, not carrying

'28

‘an obicure profession, but re-  
‘solute; expressing the image  
‘of Christ, and holding out  
‘against all opposition, to the  
‘last breath: he must give all  
‘diligence, by righteousness,  
‘and holinesse, to make his  
‘calling and election sure: many  
‘there are that snatch at the  
‘promises in the Gospel, as if  
‘they undoubtedly did be-  
‘long to them; and yet they  
‘remain sluggish, and care-  
‘lesse, and being flattered by  
‘the things of this present  
‘world, they passe in their  
‘course in quietnesse and se-  
‘curity, as if they were the  
‘onely happie men; whom  
‘neverthelesse the Lord in his  
‘providence hath ordained  
‘to eternal wrath; as you  
‘may see in Saint *Lukes Rich* Luk. 16  
‘man: thus it was with me,  
‘there

“therefore take heed.

Then came one of his Nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the young man's choler, that hee charged him with hypocrisie and dissimulation, or frenzie; to whom *spira* gravely answering, said :

*You may interpret the matter as you will : but I am sure, I am not onely the Actor, but the argument and matter of the Tragedy; I would it were frenzy either fained, or true; for if it were fained, I could put it off at pleasure; if it were a real frenzy, yet there were some hope left of Gods mercie, whereas now there is none. for I know that God hath pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his Majesty; I am a cast-away, a vassal of*



f wrath: yet dare you call it dis-  
sembling and frenzie; and can  
mock at the formidable example  
of the heavy wrath of God, that  
could teach you fear and terror:  
but it is natural to the flesh, either  
out of malice or ignorance, to speak  
reverſely of the works of God:  
The natural man discerneth not of  
both things that are of God, because  
they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

How can this be (ſaid Gri-  
bouldus) that you can thus ex-  
cellently diſcourſe of the judg-  
ments of God, and of the gra-  
ces of his holy Spirit, that you  
inde the want of them, and  
earnestly deſire them; and yet  
you think you are utterly de-  
prived of them:

Take this for certain (ſaith he)  
I want the main grace of all, and  
that which is abſolutely neceſſary;  
and God doth many times extort

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*of*

of wrath: yet dare you call it dissembling and frenzie; and can mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror: But it is natural to the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversely of the works of God: The natural man discerneth not of the things that are of God, because they are spiritually discerned.

How can this be (said Gribaudus) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgments of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit, that you finde the want of them, and earnestly desire them; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them:

Take this for certain (saith he) I want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary; and God doth many times extort

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most

most true and strange testimonies  
of his majestie, justice and mercie;  
yea, out of the mouths of very re-  
probates; for even Judas, after  
he had betrayed his Master, was  
constrained to confess his sin, and  
to justify the innocency of Christ,  
and therefore if I do the like, it  
is no new or strange matter. God  
hath taken faith from me, & left  
me other common gifts, for my  
deeper condemnation: By how  
much the more I remember what  
I had, and hear others discourse of  
what they have, by so much the  
more is my torment, in that I  
know what I want, and how there  
is no way to be relieved.

Thus spake he, the tears all  
the while trickling down;  
professing that his pangs were  
such, as that the damned  
wights in hell endure not the  
like misery; that his estate was  
worle

worse then that of Cain or Judas, and therefore hee desired to die. Yet behold (saith he) the Scriptures are accomplis'd in me; they shall desire to die, and death shall slie from them: And verily, he seemed exceedingly to fear, least his life should bee drawn out to a longer thred; and finding no ease or rest, ever and anon, cried out, O miserable wretch, O miserable wretch; then turning to the Company, he besought them in this manner;

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gifts of God's Spirit then I have done; learn to beware my misery; think not you are assured Christians, because you understand something of the Gospel; take heed you grow not secure on that ground; be constant and im-

D 2 moveable

*moveable in the maintenance of your profession: Confess even untill death, if you be called thereto; He that loveth father, mother, brother, sisters, sons, daughters, kindred, houses, lands, more then Christ, is not worthie of him.*

Luk. 9. 62.

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

*I do but herein imitate (saith Spira) the rich Glutton in the Gospel, who though in hell, yet was careful, that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: and I say to you Brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.*

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive him aright. *I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises*  
of



of the Gospel, for they are most sure; but take heed of relying on that faith that works not a holy & unblameable life, worthy of a believer; credit me it will fail, I have tried it: I presumed I had gotten the right faith; I preached it to others, I had all places of Scripture in memory that might support it; I thought myself sure, and in the mean time living impiously and carelessly; behold, now the judgments of God have overtaken me; not to correction, but to condemnation: And now you would have me to believe, but it will not be, for I fell too late; that good things belong only to such as are good; whose sins are covered with Christs death and blood, as with a quail, and guarded with his righteous merits from the flood of Gods wrath, even as with a mighty wall, least miserable mortals should be swallowed

up with greatnesse of their sins :  
 But as for me, I have as it were,  
 wilfully with mine hands pulled  
 down this Rampire; behind which  
 I might have rested in safety; and  
 now are the swelling waters come  
 even to my soul, and I am cast  
 away.

One of his familiar friends  
 chanced to say, That certainly  
 he was overcome with melan-  
 cholly; which being over-heard,  
 Spira answered;

Well, be it so, seeing you will  
 needs have it so; thus also is  
 God's wrath manifested against  
 me, in that he hath taken from me  
 the use of mine Understanding &  
 Reason, so as I can neither rightly  
 esteem and judg of my distemper,  
 nor hope of remedy: You see Bre-  
 thren, what a dangerous thing it  
 is, to stop or stay in things that con-  
 cern Gods glory; especially to dis-  
 semble

semble upon any terms : What a fearful thing is it, to be near and almost a Christian ? Never was the like example to this of mine ; and therefore, if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof. O that God would let loose his hand from me ; that it were with me now, as in times past, I would scorn the threats of the most cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, and glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flame, and my body consumed to ashes.

You say you are desperate, O Spira (said they) ! why then do you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to do ? Let me have a sword (said Spira). Why what would you do with

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it (quoth they) ? *I cannot tell you (said he) what this minde would move me to, upon occasion, nor what I would do.*

They perceiving small effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worse : For the avoiding of concourie of people ; for every day seldom fewer then twenty continued with him, and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown abroad of him; they consult to carrie him back again into his own Country ; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leavs of him : *Vergerius* amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him : *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed : For hee said, *My heart is estranged*

estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart; all good motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of malediction, hatred and blasphemy against God: I finde I grow more and more hardned in heart, and cannot stoop nor help myself: Your praiers for me shall turn to your own benefit, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom Spira embracing, said, *Although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate; but that every thing shal tend to my deeper condemnation: yet I give you most hearty thanks, for your kind office of love and good will; and the Lord return it unto you, with a plentiful increase of all good.*

The next day being brought down

down to his intended journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which hee running hastily, snatched hold of, as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation he said, *I would I were above God; for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that hee envied the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion so spent, that he appeared a perfect Anatomie: expressing to the view nothing but



but sinews and bones : vehemently raging for drink : ever pining, yet fearful to live long : dreadful of Hell, yet coveting death : in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor : And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in Hell ; he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God. And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few daies after his arrival at his own home, hee departed this present life : Yet an occasion to make us remember, *That secret things belong unto ihe Lord our God* : but charity to man, to teach him to hope all things.

F I N I S.